

richard johnson

# Five Scrolls of Musashi



for solo timpanist  
(with bass drum and tam-tam)

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five short pieces for solo timpanist  
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## *Program Notes*

In 1645, Miyamoto Musashi, arguably the greatest Japanese duelist of his time, wrote his treatise on strategy applicable to one-on-one swordsmanship, one-against-many conflict, and large-scale battle. The text contained the basics of Musashi's own "Two Heavens" school of the sword. Divided into five scrolls (or "rings") named after the five elements, his text is the inspiration for this set of short pieces for solo timpanist.

The First Scroll (Earth) serves as an introduction within both the Musashi text and this set of pieces. Influenced by Takemitsu's percussion writing for the score to Kurosawa's *Ran*, this scroll serves to prepare the listener for a solo timpanist's performance. Musashi uses the Second Scroll (Water) to comment on the basics of swordsmanship, and so this piece is based on simple *iaido* forms, with a particular focus on independence of limbs.

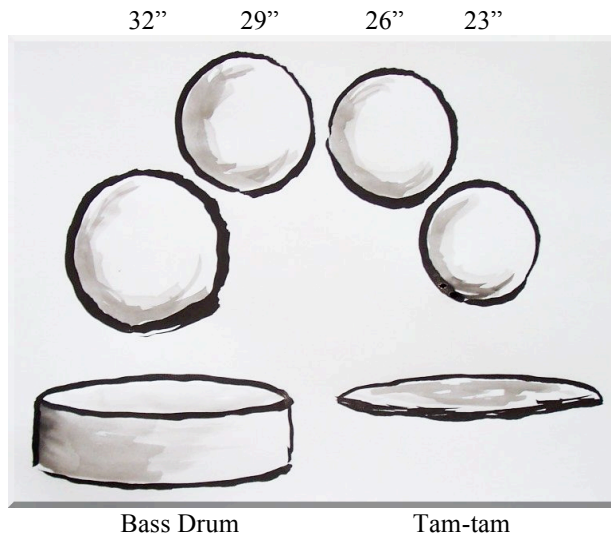
The Third and Fourth Scrolls (Fire and Wind) are heavily influenced by two significantly different ensembles from traditional Japanese music: the *taiko* and *gagaku*, respectively. The aggressive qualities of *taiko* performance combined with the final duel of Hiroshi Inagaki's Samurai Trilogy to inspire and shape "Fire," representative of Musashi's scroll on conflict. Contrastingly, the *gagaku*'s ethereal melodies guided the creation of the fourth piece in this set, where the timpani sing a hushed, airy tune.

Finally, the Fifth Scroll (Void) is Musashi's take on the Zen concept of No Mind. The timpanist performs an ostinato pattern on the four drums but the focus lies in the tuning of the drums. Ideally performed without tuning gauges, this piece forces the player into a state of No Mind.

# Performance Notes

## Setup

Setup for the performance of these pieces is as follows:



An alternative setup (planned and used by Bill Solomon, the piece's first performer) involves suspending a small tam-tam from a stand placed just beyond the 26" and 23" drums. This should only be done if the small tam-tam produces a rich, deep tone reminiscent of a larger tam.

For the performance of the entire set, fundamentals of each drum must make the drums capable of sounding the following pitches on the low end: C (32"), F (29"), Bb (26"), and D (23").

A single cymbal is required for use in *Water*. The cymbal should be chosen based on the fullness of its overtones.

Though "Five Scrolls of Musashi" was conceived as a set of five pieces, performance of individual or select pieces within this set is beyond welcome. Ideally, though, the audience should be made aware of the individual Scroll's context within the set.

In *Water*, notation was chosen to best explain actions occurring simultaneously in the hands and feet. The first staff represents the drums based on size, not pitch. The second staff is specifically for the pedals, notating changes in pitches as they occur. The third staff is an *approximate* rendering in traditional notation of the above two staves, given as a guide for the performer.

A similar principle, though not identical, applies to *Void*.

Stem notation in *Water* is generally specific to sticking (RH stem up, LH stem down) while some gestures remain unspecified. Notation in *Fire* was chosen to best display multiple lines, with sticking left to the discretion of the performer. *Wind*'s notation directly correlates to sticking.

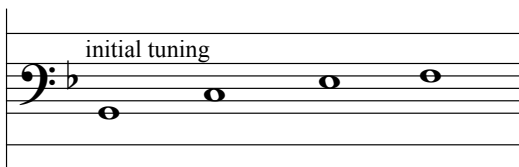
Transition from *Wind* to *Void* should occur under the decay of *Wind*'s final notes.

# Five Scrolls of Musashi

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## First Scroll - EARTH

Tam Tam  
Timpani  
Bass Drum



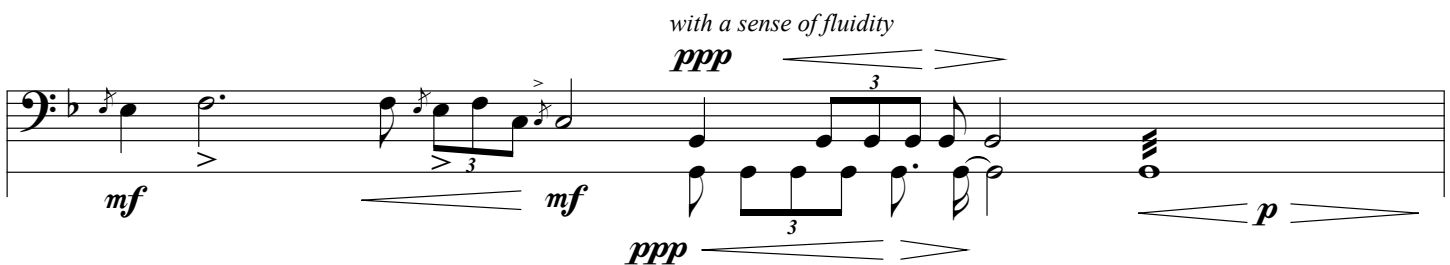
initial tuning

The initial tuning section consists of three staves. The top staff is for Tam Tam, the middle for Timpani, and the bottom for Bass Drum. The Timpani staff shows a series of four notes: a half note on G2, a half note on F2, a half note on E2, and a half note on D2. The Tam Tam and Bass Drum staves are empty.

two hard felt mallets  
play each staff in tempo, near ♩ = 60-68, unless instructed otherwise  
permit time between each staff for sound to decay  
grace notes denote time, not dynamic level



The first staff of music is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It begins with a dynamic marking of *f* and a grace note. The melody consists of several notes, including a triplet of eighth notes. The dynamics range from *ff* to *pp*, with a *mf* section in the middle. The staff ends with a double bar line.



The second staff of music continues the melody in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. It starts with a dynamic marking of *mf* and a grace note. The melody includes a triplet of eighth notes. The dynamics range from *mf* to *ppp*, with a *p* marking at the end. The staff ends with a double bar line.

with a sense of fluidity  
*ppp*

with an increasing degree of violence...

A musical staff in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. It features a continuous, ascending sixteenth-note run that spans the entire staff. The dynamics are marked as *p* at the beginning, *mf* in the middle, and *f* at the end. The run concludes with a final note followed by a fermata.

with serenity, reverence

A musical staff in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The melody is slow and serene, starting with a *p* dynamic. It includes a triplet of eighth notes marked *mp* and ends with a fermata over a final note.

...focus on silent, full breaths;  
permit the tempo to derive from this focus...

A musical staff in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. It features two breath marks labeled "inhale" and "exhale". The first section starts with a *ppp* dynamic and a single note. The second section, marked "inhale", is a continuous ascending sixteenth-note run. The third section, marked "exhale", consists of a few notes with a *p pp* dynamic.

slightly slower;  
broadly and emphatically

accel.....

A musical staff in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The melody is marked "slightly slower; broadly and emphatically" and starts with a *f* dynamic. It then transitions to a *pp* dynamic. The tempo is marked "accel....." and the piece concludes with a *f* dynamic.

# Second Scroll - WATER

use legato mallets in both hands  
 place a cymbal, inverted, on the 23" drum  
 (choose a cymbal with rich overtones)

$\bullet = 64$  as fluid forms, flowing one to another;  
 a natural process of body and spirit

Tam-Tam

(spaces correspond to specified drum) *pp*

Timpani *pp*

Bass Drum *pp*

Pedals

initial tuning  
 (32" 29" 26" 23")

Tam-tam

approximate sounding

Bass Drum

6

11

*pp* *p* *mp* *p*

32"

32"

*p*

16

*pp* *p* *mp* *pp*

32"

29"

23"

26"

*p* *mp*

parentheses denote imprecise (colouristic) tunings

21

*pp* *mf* *pp*

32"

26 *pp*

*pp*

29''

31 *pp*

*pp*

32''

36 *mf* *p* *pp*

*mf* *p* *pp*

32'' 32''



42

*p* *ppp* *p* *pp* *mp* *mf* *pp*

32'' 29'' 23'' 26''

48

*ppp*

32'' 23'' 23''

54

*pp* *ppp* *pp* *pppp*

*pp* *pppp*

RH tam-tam mallet

# Third Scroll - FIRE

use wood mallets in both hands

Tam Tam

Timpani

Bass Drum

initial tuning

aggressively, violently  $\bullet = 60$

*mp*

head rim

*f*

*mf*

4

3

5:4

3

*p*

3

3

3

3

*mf*

*f*

9

3

3

*p*

3

3

*p*

3

3

*mp*

3

3

*p*

*mf*

*f*

*f*

*f*

13

grad. accel.

5:4

$\bullet = 72$

continue accel. and cresc.

19

3-6x

24

$\bullet = 120$

rit.

$\bullet = 64-72$

*pp*

*mf*

*pp*

7

29 *mp*  $\frac{7}{8}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{6}{8}$  2x

35

40 (double time) *mf*

46 *p* *ff*

52 *pp* 2-4x

59 *f* *f* *p* *mf* *p* *f* *p*

66 *ff* *ad lib. repeat. as desired rit and dim. to silence* motionless = 72

72  $\bullet = 120$  *ppp* 2-5x

*ff* *remains ff*

77 *ff* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *p* *ff* *p*

82 *mp* *ppp* 3

87 *p* *mf* *ff* 3

92 *mp* *f* *mp* *grad. cresc.*

97

*mf* *p* *ff* *f* *f*

free time... anticipate!

102

*mf* *ff*

(tam-tam optional)

106

*mf* *p* *pp*

110

*fff* *pp*

(sticking is theatrical and optional)

ad lib. repeat. as desired

116

*fff* *mp* *p*

intentional miss, as if a 5th timpano

motionless E-E $\flat$  = 60 as though a body falls

# Fourth Scroll - WIND

RH (stems up) uses legato mallet;  
 LH (stems down), wood mallet

initial tuning

*with serenity and reverence, singing from the right hand, supporting with the left.*

$\bullet = 68$

*p*

Head Click sticks together

6

12

*ppp* *p*

18

B $\flat$  - C

24

The musical score is written for three percussion instruments: Tam Tam, Timpani, and Bass Drum. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 6, 12, 18, and 24 indicated. The Tam Tam part consists of a single note at the beginning, labeled 'initial tuning'. The Timpani part features a melodic line with various rhythmic values and dynamics, including a piano (*p*) dynamic and a triplet. The Bass Drum part includes a 'Head' note and a 'Click sticks together' instruction. Performance instructions include 'with serenity and reverence, singing from the right hand, supporting with the left.' and a tempo marking of  $\bullet = 68$ . Dynamics range from *ppp* to *p*. The score includes various musical notations such as stems, beams, and accidentals.

28 *mf*

33 *p* *mp* *p*

G $\flat$  - F

38 *ppp* *p*

3

42

3

49 *ppp* *mp*

RH tam-tam mallet

C - B $\flat$

*pp*

\* grace note occurs on downbeat;  
do not rearticulate G $\flat$

attaca Fifth Scroll  
(include tam-tam swell even if excluding  
Fifth Scroll from performance)

# Fifth Scroll - VOID

initial tuning  
(carried over from Fourth Scroll)

Timpani

four soft marimba mallets

continue playing this ostinato pattern in the hands over the specified drums, at a rapid, but comfortable tempo

once the ostinato is established, begin tuning changes notated below. changes may take anywhere from a half second to numerous seconds. dynamic level must never surpass piano.

tempo of hands and tempo of feet should not correlate. tempo directions (e.g. *accel.*) refer to hand tempo. fermata only applies to foot tempo.

following completion of system above, bring ostinato to a more relaxed tempo, drawing out this final system as desired

all grace notes: at edge for both Bass Drum and Tam-tam

permit full decay of sound



# Fifth Scroll - VOID

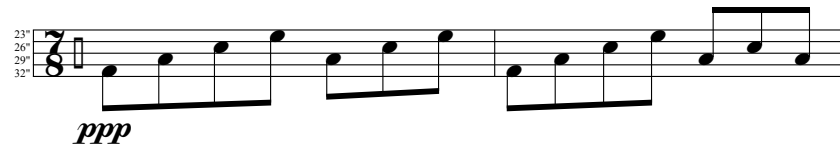
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